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G8 leaders at one of the Lough Erne summit meetings

'GROUP OF EIGHT' MEETS

The leaders of the G8 countries gathered for their annual meeting, or summit, on 17th and 18th June. The summit was arranged by the United Kingdom (UK) and hosted by the country's prime minister, David Cameron.

The two-day meeting was held at a hotel and golf **resort** at Lough (pronounced 'lock') Erne, in Northern Ireland. The island of Ireland includes the Republic of Ireland (an independent country, commonly known as Ireland) and Northern Ireland. The UK is made up of Northern Ireland, England, Scotland and Wales.

'G8' is short for 'Group of Eight'. The original members were the six countries that in 1975 had the world's largest economies and elected their leaders democratically. The members were the USA, Japan, Germany, France, the UK, and Italy. Canada joined in 1976 and the name changed to the G7.

The G7 became the G8 when Russia joined in 1998. Russia held its first democratic election in 1991 after the Russian-led Soviet Union broke up. Then Russia's economy was small. But the G7 countries invited Russia to become a member to help with its sudden change from a communist system of government to a democratic one.

In recent years, two other leaders have attended the G8 meetings. One is José Manuel Barroso. He is the president of the European Commission. This is the organisation that runs the day-to-day management of the European Union (EU). The other is Herman Van Rompuy. He is the president of the European Council, which represents the leaders of the EU's 27 member countries.

In the past the G8 countries were those with the world's largest economies. This is no longer true. Over the last 20 years

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the economies of some developing countries have been growing much more quickly than those of the G8. For instance, the economies of Brazil and India are now bigger than those of Italy and Canada. Both also have democratic systems of government.

After the USA, China now has the world's second-biggest economy. Many even expect it to overtake America within the next ten years. However, China has a communist system of government and does not democratically elect its leaders.

The G8 member countries now represent about 42% of the world's total economic output, or GDP (Gross Domestic Product). GDP is the value of all services and finished, or completed, goods produced in a country within a 12-month period.



G8 leaders at Lough Erne

At their meeting in 2009 the G8 leaders decided to make some changes. They all agreed that developing countries with the largest economies should be included when any important international financial decisions are made. The G8 plus this group of developing countries is known as the G20. The G20 is made up of the 19 countries with the world's biggest economies plus the EU. It too meets every year. The next G20 summit will be held in St Petersburg, in Russia, in September.

At the G8 meeting at Lough Erne most of the discussions were about two subjects. One was the war in Syria and the other the amount of tax

that larger companies, which operate in many different countries, pay.

Fighting in Syria has been going on for two years. It began after the government ordered the army to use weapons to stop street protests. The demonstrators were complaining about the country's president, Bashar al-Assad, his government and the police force. The president and his family have controlled Syria for over 40 years.

So far it's thought that at least 90,000 people have been killed in Syria. Over 1.3 million Syrians have crossed the borders into Turkey, Jordan and Lebanon to get away from the fighting. Most of these people are now living in large refugee camps.

Some of the anti-government fighters, or rebels, formed an organisation known as the Free Syrian Army (FSA). Yet there are several other armed opposition groups that are now also fighting against the Syrian army. However, many people in certain parts of Syria support Mr al-Assad.

Most of the G8 countries, including the USA and the UK, have said that they want the Syrian rebels to win. However, they are reluctant to become involved in the war. Instead they have talked about providing the rebels with better weapons. Yet, at the meeting, Vladimir Putin, the Russian president, argued against this. Traditionally, Russia has been friendly with Mr al-Assad and the Syrian government. Mr Putin told the other G8 leaders that giving the rebels better weapons would cause even bigger problems in future.

Mr Putin and Barack Obama, the president of the USA, said that they both wanted to end the war in Syria. They agreed to try to persuade both sides to meet for peace talks. Their plan is for these to be held in Switzerland within the next few months.

G20 MEMBERS

Argentina	Mexico
Australia	<i>Russia</i>
Brazil	Saudi Arabia
<i>Canada</i>	South Africa
China	South Korea
<i>France</i>	Turkey
<i>Germany</i>	<i>UK</i>
India	<i>USA</i>
Indonesia	European
<i>Italy</i>	Union (EU)
<i>Japan</i>	

■ G8 member countries

In recent years many large international companies have set up offices in several small countries. In these countries tax rates are very low. The companies use these offices to avoid paying higher taxes in the countries in which they do most of their business. These arrangements are not unlawful. However, the G8 members agreed to change the tax rules in their own countries to stop these companies from being able to pay less tax in this way.

Each G8 leader takes a turn to be the group's president. In 2012 it was Mr Obama. This year's president is the UK's prime minister. In 2014 the presidency will pass to Russia. So the next G8 summit will be held in Russia and hosted by the Russian president, Vladimir Putin. ■

PERMIAN CREATURE DISCOVERY

Palaeontologists – scientists who study fossils – have discovered the ancient remains of an unusual looking creature. It has been given the name *Bunostegos*.

The fossilised bones were found in the northern part of Niger. The

scientists say that the creature is a type of pareiasaur. These reptiles were about the same size as a modern day cow. They were herbivores, which means they only ate plants. Pareiasaurs lived between 266 million and 252 million years ago. This was around the middle and end of a period of the Earth's history known as the Permian.



How Pangea may have looked

Many millions of years ago the landmasses, or continents, that we know today were in different places. Over very long periods of time they have 'drifted' apart from one another, or joined together. It's thought that at several times in the Earth's history all the continents were one large landmass. One of these 'supercontinents' is believed to have existed between 1.1 billion and 750 million years ago. Scientists call this huge landmass Rodinia.

Rodinia eventually broke up. Yet by the time of the Permian Period the landmasses are thought to have drifted back together again to form another supercontinent. This huge landmass has been given the name Pangea. The ocean that surrounded it is known as Panthalassa. Both names come from Ancient Greek. In Greek Pangea means 'all' and 'Earth' and Panthalassa is 'all' and 'ocean'.

Niger, where the *Bunostegos* fossil was found is a modern day country in Africa. But when the creature was alive this part of Africa was in the middle of Pangea. For many years scientists have suspected that there was a large desert in the central part of Pangea. It seems to have acted as a barrier. Few creatures moved into the desert and those that lived there did not move out. This meant that animals like *Bunostegos* evolved in very different ways to those that lived in the wetter areas of Pangea.

All pareiasaurs had bone-like armour on their backs. They also had **bulbous** growths on their skulls. However, of all the pareiasaurs discovered so far *Bunostegos* seemed to have had the most and biggest 'bony knobs' on its head. This is why it has been called *Bunostegos*, as this word means 'knobby roof'. The scientists say these growths were probably covered in skin. They may therefore have been similar to the horns of modern day giraffes.



Pareiasaur

During the Earth's long history there have been a number of mass extinctions. Perhaps the most well-known was 66 million years ago when all the dinosaurs died out. However, the worst mass extinction in the Earth's history was at the end of the Permian Period, or around 252 million years ago. Then nearly 90% of the creatures living in the sea and

70% of those on land became extinct. These included *Bunostegos*. It is not known what caused this mass extinction. ■

PROTESTS IN BRAZIL

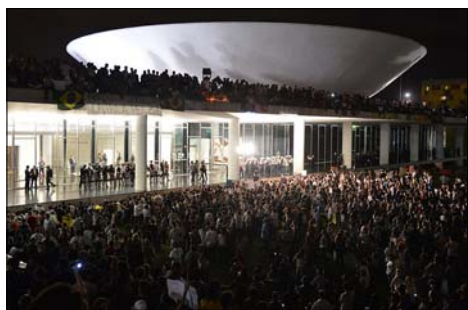
On 22nd June Dilma Rousseff, the president of Brazil, announced several new proposals. A few days later she also suggested that there should be a referendum about making changes to the way that Brazil is governed. A referendum is a vote in which all adults can take part. Ms Rousseff was responding to street protests that have been taking place in many Brazilian cities since the beginning of June.

The protests first began in São Paulo, one of Brazil's largest cities. The demonstrators were angry that the mayor of the city had decided to increase the price of local bus and train tickets. A few thousand people took part. However, many Brazilians complained that the police had used too much force to break up the protest. They were angry that rubber bullets, pepper spray and tear gas had been used.

In the following days the protests got bigger. They also spread to other cities such as Rio de Janeiro. Even though they began as protests against more expensive bus and train fares they soon became anti-government demonstrations.

The protesters said they were angry about schools and hospitals in Brazil. These, they claimed, are badly run. The demonstrators also accused many government officials of being corrupt, or dishonest. In Brasilia, the capital city, some protesters climbed onto the roof of Brazil's Congress, or parliament building.

Brazil is due to host the Football World Cup next year and the Olympic Games in 2016. The World Cup takes place every four years. It is one of the world's largest and most popular sporting competitions. However, it costs huge amounts of money to host these big international sporting events. Special sports facilities, such as large stadiums, have to be built.



Protesters at Brazil's Congress building

In Brazil the taxes people have to pay are high when compared to other countries. The demonstrators said they were angry that much of this tax money was being spent on big sporting events. They claimed it should be used to improve the country's schools, hospitals and transport systems.

In recent years Brazil has been a very successful country. Its economy has been growing quickly. More people are now able to find good jobs. Many of those who took part in the demonstrations were well-educated younger people. Most have well paid jobs. Nowadays these people visit other countries, such as the USA, for holidays. They say that when they compare Brazil to other countries they realise that it has many difficulties. They blame local and government officials and police leaders for these problems.

Ms Rousseff said that she wanted to listen to the protesters' complaints. Her new proposals include

spending much of the money the country makes from its newly-discovered oil fields on education, to spend more money improving transport systems and to pay for foreign doctors to come and work in Brazil's hospitals. On 25th June members of Brazil's Congress voted in favour of Ms Rousseff's proposals. They also agreed that the referendum on political reform should take place. ■

NEW EMIR IN QATAR

On 25th June the ruler of Qatar, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani, made a short speech that was broadcast on live television. He announced that he had decided to abdicate, or step down. One of his sons, Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al-Thani, would become the country's new emir, or ruler.

Qatar is one of the Gulf Arab States. These six nations are all close to the Persian Gulf. The other five are Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). All of these nations make large amounts of money from their oil and gas fields. Even though some have a few elected officials the Gulf Arab States are what's known as absolute monarchies. This means the head of their royal family makes all the important decisions. The rulers of Qatar, Kuwait and the UAE are called emirs.

Sheikh Hamad's family have ruled Qatar for more than 130 years. It is unusual for a leader of a Gulf Arab State to step down. Normally they continue to rule their country until they die. Sheikh Hamad is 61 years old and has ruled Qatar since 1995. He took control after overthrowing, or deposing, his father.

There have been many changes in Qatar since Sheikh Hamad became its ruler less than 20 years ago. Today it is believed to be the richest nation in the world. It is a small country with a population of 1.9 million people. However, of these only around 300,000 are native Qataris. The others are mostly immigrant workers from the Philippines and south Asia. Qatar is the world's largest exporter of liquefied natural gas (LNG), from which it makes most of its money.

Sheikh Hamad set up the Al-Jazeera news and television company. Al-Jazeera's broadcasts, which are popular in many Arab countries, are made in both Arabic and English. He also allowed the USA to open a large military base in Qatar.



Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al-Thani

In 2005 Sheikh Hamad started the Qatar Investment Authority (QIA). This organisation uses some of the country's money to invest in companies in other countries. Many of these investments have been made in UK companies. For example, the QIA owns around 7% of Barclays Bank and 26% of Sainsbury's, a large UK supermarket company. The QIA also owns many large buildings in other countries. Experts say that the QIA's investments are worth about £74 billion (US\$113 billion).

In recent years Qatar has become involved in the politics of other nations. For instance, in 2011, it helped

to overthrow the leader of Libya, Colonel Gaddafi. Most recently Qatar has been supplying money and weapons to the rebel forces in Syria. These forces are trying to defeat Syria's president, Bashar al-Assad, and the Syrian army. Qatar has also been helping the government of Egypt. It has even allowed the Taliban to set up an office in the country. This is meant to be a place where peace talks can be held to end the war in Afghanistan.

During his announcement Sheikh Hamad declared that it was time to hand over to a new generation. He said he was sure that his son, Sheikh Tamim, would be a responsible and trustworthy leader.

Qatar's new emir is 33 years old. He went to school in the UK. He also attended Sandhurst, which is the UK's military college. Most people expect Sheikh Tamim to rule Qatar in the same way that his father did. ■

'UNDERSTANDING' SPIDERS

An international team of scientists have been studying the behaviour of an unusual type of spider that is found in Brazil. Most spiders hunt alone, or they trap their prey on their own webs. If they meet another spider they often fight.

The colonial orb-web spider (*Parawixia bistriata*) is different. Including their legs the spiders are about four centimetres (1.6 inches) across. During the day they live in a 'colony', which explains how the spiders get their name. Hundreds of them join together and create a round shape about the size of a football. The spiders form this round 'colony' in the same place each day in a tree or bush.

The 'spider colony' is at the centre of many thick lines of spider silk. These radiate, or spread out, from the colony to the branches of other nearby trees and bushes. Around the time that the Sun sets the colony changes. The spiders move out along the radiating lines of silk. They then build their own webs. These are attached to several of the thick silk lines.



Colonial orb-web spiders (Francis Ratnieks)

During the night they will eat any small insects that get trapped in their own webs. The following morning, before it gets light the spiders consume their own webs. They then move back along the permanent silk lines and form their ball-like colony again.

If one spider has finished, or is making, a web it will scare off any others that come close. It does this by bouncing up and down on its web. The approaching spider will move away and look for a place where there are no other webs, so it can build its own.

However, there is not enough room on the lines of silk for all the spiders to make their own webs. Early in the evening, when there is still a lot of space left, spiders with webs will scare away those that don't have them. Yet as it gets later all the spaces for web building on the thick lines of silk are used up. Many of the spiders therefore have nowhere to build their own webs.

The spiders without webs will then move close to those that have

built them. Even if the spiders with webs start bouncing up and down those without them will now not move away. Instead they wait nearby. During the night if the spider with a web catches a larger insect the one without a web will eat some of it. Unusually for spiders, the ones with webs seem happy to let this happen.

The scientists say that the colonial orb-web spiders seem to understand it is better to give some of their prey away instead of fighting over it. What's more the next night the spiders might be some of those without a web. Then they will expect to be able to eat some of the prey trapped in other spiders' webs. ■

UNESCO's WORLD HERITAGE LIST

The World Heritage Committee held its annual meeting in Phnom Penh, the capital of Cambodia, between 17th and 27th of June. Each year the committee announces which sites in the world have been added to its World Heritage list. During the meeting the committee agreed that 19 places will become new World Heritage Sites.

The World Heritage Committee is part of UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization). One of UNESCO's jobs is to protect and look after places in the world that are important to humans heritage, or our cultural, social and natural history.

Any government may ask UNESCO to put a special place, or site, in its country on its list of World Heritage Sites. The World Heritage Committee then decides whether it should be included.

World Heritage Sites are places UNESCO believes need special protection. There is even a list of World Sites In Danger. These are ones UNESCO thinks are at risk of being damaged or even destroyed. For example, this year the committee added all six of Syria's World Heritage Sites to its danger list. These include parts of two cities, Aleppo and Damascus, some Roman ruins and a very old castle. There has been fighting between two opposing groups in Syria for the last two years. Some of the country's Heritage Sites have already been damaged in the conflict.

Countries that apply to have a site on the World Heritage list must promise to provide money to look after it. They must also promise not to do anything that will threaten the site. If it is listed as a World Heritage Site UNESCO will give the country some extra money each year. This money has to be used to safeguard and protect the site.



Mount Fuji, in Japan

World Heritage Sites may be related to human culture. Often they are buildings. For instance, one of the new sites is the Golestan Palace, in Tehran, the capital of Iran. Sites can also be 'cultural landscapes'. The Honghe Hani rice terraces, in southern China, which have just been added to the list, are an example. These terraces are on steep mountainsides. The people who live in this part of China

have built the terraces over the last 1,200 years. Many of the sites are ancient. For instance, the pyramids of Giza, in Egypt, are a World Heritage Site.

Other World Heritage Sites are 'natural sites'. These are ecologically important. An example of a natural site, which has just been included in the list, is the Namib Sand Sea. This is an area of desert along the coast of Namibia. It is almost completely uninhabited. Many of the small animals that live there are not found anywhere else in the world.

Of the 19 new World Heritage Sites announced by the committee at this year's meeting two were volcanoes. One is Mount Etna, in Italy, and the other Mount Fuji, or Fujisan, in Japan. Mount Etna is Europe's largest active volcano. Mount Fuji is the highest mountain in Japan.

In total there are now about 980 World Heritage Sites in 160 different countries. Italy has the most. Many of these are very old buildings. The country with the most natural sites is Australia. ■

FLASH FLOODS IN NORTHERN INDIA

Heavy early monsoon rains in a northern part of India have damaged or destroyed a number of mountain villages. Many roads and bridges have been washed away. Huge landslides have also blocked roads that lead to four well-known Hindu temples. Tens of thousands of pilgrims and tourists were trapped by the floods and landslides.

The worst affected area was the state of Uttarakhand. The rains began on 14th June and lasted for three days. Officials at Dehra Dun,

the largest city in the state, say the early monsoon rains in this part of India have been the heaviest for 60 years. For instance, the area around the Kedarnath temple had 360 millimetres (14 inches) of rain. This is five times more than usual.



The annual monsoon is important for all countries in the Indian subcontinent – India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Bhutan. These countries rely on the monsoon for much of their supply of water. For example, in India around 80% of the rain that falls throughout the year does so during the monsoon.

India's monsoon lasts from June to September. It doesn't rain every day during the monsoon. Yet there can be heavy non-stop rainfall for long periods of time.

The temples in Uttarakhand are high in the mountains. Pilgrims often visit them at this time of the year. Normally they have all returned before the monsoon rains start. The valleys leading to the temples are very steep. The heavy rain caused sudden floods. These were made worse by snow melting higher up in the mountains.

When floodwaters appear very suddenly it is often called flash

flooding. This can happen when the ground is no longer able to absorb any water. Heavy rain then flows over the surface of the land and into valleys, which fill up quickly. If this happens 'walls' of water will rush down the river valleys.

The flash floods destroyed many villages. Huge rocks were carried down the valleys by the fast flowing water. Several hotels used by the pilgrims were swept away. The Kedarnath temple's stonewalls were not badly damaged. Yet a layer of mud and rocks four metres (13 feet) deep now surrounds the building. This debris was left behind by the flash flood.

Because all the roads were blocked or washed away people were not able to travel back down the valleys. Many were trapped in buses, which became stuck and could not move.



Hindu temple in Uttarakhand, in northern India

After the heavy rains officials estimated that as many as 100,000 people were trapped in the mountainous areas. The army used 45 helicopters to rescue many of them. But this has been difficult because of the steep sided valleys. There are not many places that the helicopters can land. The helicopters took soldiers to the worst affected places so they could help with the rescue.

The helicopters also dropped food and medicine. One of them hit the side of a mountain and crashed. Thousands of people spent more

than a week on the mountain slopes before they were rescued. Government officials estimate that around 1,000 people may have died in the flash floods. Yet some believe that the final figure is likely to be much higher. ■

TALIBAN TALKS DISAGREEMENT

A special ceremony was held in Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan, on 18th June. During it Afghanistan's security forces, or its army and police, officially took over from the NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) troops in the country. Hamid Karzai, Afghanistan's president, said it was an important day in his country's history.

There are still 97,000 NATO or foreign troops in Afghanistan. Most are from the USA. American and foreign troops will now not take any further part in fighting against the Taliban. Instead the Afghan security forces will do this. However, the Afghan forces can still ask the NATO troops for help and military assistance if they need it. Nearly all the foreign troops are expected to leave Afghanistan by the end of 2014.

The war in Afghanistan has been going on for 12 years. It began when the USA led an invasion of the country in 2001. This was shortly after a militant group, called al-Qaeda, had attacked the USA. Then al-Qaeda had its training camps in Afghanistan. At that time the Taliban ruled the country under very strict Islamic laws. The USA demanded that it hand over the al-Qaeda leaders who were in Afghanistan. When the Taliban refused the USA invaded.

However, the Taliban was not defeated. Many of its fighters moved

to the southern mountainous areas close to the border with Pakistan. The fight against the Taliban and al-Qaeda has continued. Since 2001 other nations have also sent troops to Afghanistan. Most have been from NATO member countries.

The USA helped to organise a presidential election a few years after the invasion. Mr Karzai was declared to be the winner. Since then he has won another election. However, Mr Karzai has announced that he plans to stand down next year, when the next presidential election is held.



Taliban office in Doha

While American and NATO forces have been in Afghanistan they have helped to train a new Afghan army and police force. Now the country has 350,000 troops and police. However, many people suspect that the Taliban is waiting for the American and NATO forces to leave. They believe that once this happens the Taliban will be able to defeat the Afghan security forces and take control of the country again.

Shortly after the ceremony in Kabul officials in the USA made an announcement. They said that they would be taking part in peace talks with Taliban leaders within a few days. These would be the first formal talks between the USA and the Taliban since the war began in 2001. Recently, the Taliban has set up an office in Doha, the capital of Qatar. It was allowed to do this so

that future peace talks could be held outside Afghanistan.

It was thought that Mr Karzai would send his own officials to take part in the talks in Doha. Yet he insisted that his government and not American officials should lead the peace talks. Mr Karzai complained that a Taliban flag had been put up at the office in Doha. He was also angry about a sign outside the building. It said that it was the 'office of Afghanistan's official government'. Later the flag and sign were removed. By this time Mr Karzai had announced that his government would not take part in any American-led peace talks.

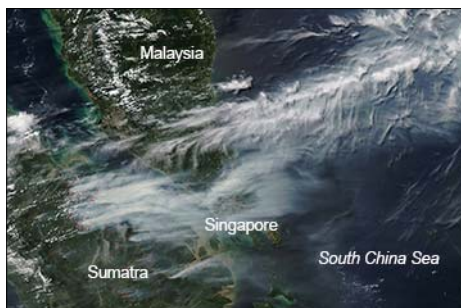
The USA says that the peace talks will take place. Yet it is not known when they will start. Some people have criticised the government of the USA for arranging them. American officials, they argue, should have insisted that the Taliban suspend any planned attacks in Afghanistan before agreeing to any talks. ■

SOUTH EAST ASIA HAZE

On 24th June Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, the president of Indonesia, apologised to the people of Singapore and Malaysia. He said he was sorry for all the smoke, or haze, that has come from forest fires in Indonesia. The smoke has caused record-breaking levels of air pollution in both countries.

Landowners on the island of Sumatra have been setting fire to areas of forest to clear it. The island is part of Indonesia. It is only 250 kilometres (155 miles) from Singapore and the southern part of Malaysia. Once the forest has been cleared the land is used to grow a type of palm tree from which palm oil is made.

In Indonesia clearing forests in this way is unlawful. However, these land-clearing fires are frequently used. This year many of the fires are out of control and have spread over a large area. The winds have then been blowing thick smoke towards Singapore and Malaysia.



Satellite image of smoke haze on 19th June

The problem began around 13th June. At first Singapore was the worst affected. The country uses a system for measuring the amount of pollution in the air called the Pollutant Standards Index (PSI). On 20th June the PSI reached 401, which was a record. A PSI reading of 200 is said to be 'unhealthy' and over 300 is 'hazardous'.

The smoke was so thick in the city that it was difficult to see many of the taller buildings. People wore facemasks when going outside. Some said it was similar to standing next to a bonfire or barbecue. Lee Hsien Loong, Singapore's prime minister, suggested that people should stay inside. Many companies told their workers to stay at home. The last time a similar smoke haze from Sumatra badly affected Singapore was 16 years ago. Then the highest PSI reading was 226.

After the smoke began to clear in Singapore it became worse in Malaysia. The country's prime minister, Najib Razak, advised people in the southern part of the country to stay in their homes. Most schools were closed. On 25th June a special

ceremony was held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia's capital city. An election was recently held in the country and the ceremony was for the official opening of Malaysia's parliament. However, because of the smoke the ceremony had to be held indoors. This had never happened before.

Indonesian officials said that hundreds of firefighters had been sent to Sumatra to try to put out the fires. Helicopters were used to drop water on the flames. Heavy rains fell on Sumatra on 26th June. These helped to extinguish some of the fires and reduce the amount of smoke. Yet officials in Singapore and Malaysia warned that the problem might continue for several more weeks. ■

FAMOUS AUTHOR'S HOMES

Groups of people in both India and Myanmar (also known as Burma) have been campaigning to save two buildings. Even though the buildings are in different countries and thousands of kilometres apart they have a connection. Both were once the home of a famous author, George Orwell (1903 – 1950).

George Orwell's real name was Eric Blair. He used George Orwell as his pen name. He was a journalist and a writer of fiction books. Nowadays he is best known for two novels – *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

Animal Farm is the story of what happens when all the animals living on a farm decide that they can run it themselves without people being in charge. So they chase the farmer away. At first all the animals are equal and the farm is peaceful. The animals all make decisions democratically. Yet as time goes on the

pigs want to run the farm. They begin to deceive the other animals into thinking things would be better if the pigs were in charge. In the end, the pigs rule the other animals even more cruelly than the farmer did.



George Orwell

Animal Farm was written as an **allegory**, using the animal characters to represent something else. Orwell wrote it as a way to describe what he believed happened in Russia after the 1917 Russian revolution. Then the Russian king, or tsar, was forced to step down. A group of communist leaders took over. The farm animals in the novel represent the Russian people, and the pigs represent the communist leaders. Some people believe *Animal Farm* is an allegory of any type of communism.

The idea of 'Big Brother' comes from Orwell's novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. The story is about a society in which nobody is allowed to think for him or herself. The government controls everything everyone does. Big Brother is the name for the dictator in the story who watches everyone. Nothing the characters do escapes Big Brother's eyes.

Today people use the phrase 'Big Brother' to describe a government that seems to be taking too much control over how people live. Leaders who control their country in a very strict way are sometimes said to be 'Orwellian'.

Nineteen Eighty-Four is set in the future. Some people think

that Orwell chose the date of the title because he wrote the book in 1948.

The house in which Orwell was born is in a town called Motihari, in northern India. In 1904, only one year after his birth Orwell's mother moved back to the UK and took her children with her. In recent years the small house has been damaged by an earthquake, lived in by pigs and is in danger of falling down. A group of people in India now want to repair the house and turn it into a museum.

After leaving school Orwell joined the police force that operated in the UK's colonies. In 1922 he was sent to Burma. There he worked in a small town called Kathar for one year. Orwell later used this town as the setting for one of his first books called *Burmese Days*. It was published in 1934.

The house in which Orwell lived in Kathar is still standing. However, only a small part of it is lived in and the rest is in danger of falling down. A group has been formed to try to save the house. They too want to turn it into a museum. The group fears that big companies are now planning to knock down many of the old buildings in Kathar so they can put up new ones. These older buildings include several that were described by Orwell in *Burmese Days*. ■

NEW AIRBUS PLANE

In recent years the Airbus Company has been working on a new passenger aircraft. On 14th June the new plane, called the A350, took off from an airfield in southern France for its first test flight. The aircraft then completed a four-hour flight before returning to the same airfield.

Large passenger planes are very expensive to make. They take many years to design and build. Currently there are only two makers of these types of planes in the world. Airbus is one and the other is the Boeing Company. When a type of business activity or industry is controlled by two organisations it is often called a duopoly. A monopoly is when one company has complete control of an industry or service.



A350

Boeing's main factory is in Seattle, in the state of Washington, in the USA. Planes were first made in this factory just over 100 years ago. The company also has smaller factories, or plants, in several other American states. Boeing is a 'public company'. This means it is owned by shareholders – people or companies who buy smaller 'parts of', or 'shares in', a company. They then get a say in how it is run. Boeing has about 160,000 workers.

Airbus is different. Even though it has some shareholders, a group, or **consortium**, of European governments and companies, owns most of the company. Around 55,000 people work for Airbus. The company's headquarters and main factory are in France, but it has other plants in Germany, the UK and Spain.

Perhaps the most famous Boeing plane is the 747. The first 747 was made 44 years ago. Because of its size it was nicknamed the 'jumbo jet'. The company made over 1,400

jumbo jets. This type of aircraft is still used by many of the world's airline companies.

In 2007 Airbus launched a new plane called the A380. This plane can carry 525 passengers. It is the largest passenger plane in the world and is often called the 'super jumbo'. Airbus has now sold A380s to many different airline companies. To compete with the Airbus A380 plane Boeing has recently launched a new design of its old jumbo jet called the 747-8. This can carry 467 passengers, which is 51 more than its old jumbo jet.

At the same time that Airbus was making its super jumbo Boeing was working on a very different, smaller type of plane. Known as the 'Dreamliner', or 787, it was built to a **revolutionary** design. Much of the plane is made from a super-strong plastic called carbon-**reinforced** composite. This makes it much lighter. The plane therefore uses less fuel than other passenger aircraft. Dreamliners can carry up to 330 people.

Many people think that Airbus decided to build its new A350 because of the Dreamliner's popularity. So far Boeing has had orders for about 890 Dreamliners. Most are yet to be built. Many different passenger aircraft companies have ordered the plane. The main reason it's popular is that it uses a smaller amount of fuel. This means it is much less expensive to operate.

The A350 is about the same size as the Dreamliner. Like the Dreamliner it too is made from super-strong plastic. It also has special engines. These have been designed to burn less fuel. Airbus says its new plane will not be available until the end of 2014. However, it claims that passenger aircraft companies have already placed orders for 600 of them. ■

FIRST WORLD WAR RELIC DISPLAYED

An historically significant under-shirt was put on display in a museum in Vienna, the capital of Austria, on 21st June. Archduke Franz Ferdinand was wearing the garment when he was assassinated, or shot and killed, on 28th June 1914. The **relic**, which is stained with the Archduke's blood, is rarely seen in public.

The Archduke's assassination was the **'trigger'** or 'spark' that set off the First World War (1914 – 1918). For this reason the assassination is sometimes described as 'the shot that echoed around the world'. The war began about six weeks after the Archduke was killed.

Many countries in Europe and other parts of the world were involved in the First World War. It's estimated that around 35 million people were killed or badly injured during the four years of fighting.

In 1914 the elderly Emperor Franz Josef ruled the Austro-Hungarian Empire. His eldest son, Archduke Franz Ferdinand, was heir to the throne. The empire was centred on the modern-day countries of Austria and Hungary. At that time it had been in existence for about 650 years.

The Austro-Hungarian Empire was allied to Germany during the First World War. It was therefore on the losing side. After the war ended the empire was broken up into a number of different countries.

On 28th June 1914 the 50-year-old Archduke and his wife, Sophie, were visiting Sarajevo. This is the largest city in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which, at that time, was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

While their car was being driven through the city a 19-year-old man, Gavrilo Princip, stepped out from the crowd with a pistol, or handgun. He fired two shots. One hit the Archduke and the other his wife. Both died a short time afterwards.

Princip was captured. It was then discovered that he was part of a larger group that wanted freedom from the Austro-Hungarian Empire. This group seemed to be supported by others in Serbia, a nearby country.

A few weeks later the leaders of the Austro-Hungarian Empire insisted that Serbia accept a number of demands. It would have been difficult for Serbia to agree to all these. One, for example, was that Austro-Hungarian police be allowed to operate in Serbia. Before making their demands the Austro-Hungarian leaders made sure that Germany would support them if an invasion of Serbia were ordered. After Serbia refused to agree to all its demands the Austro-Hungarian Empire declared war on the country on 28th July 1914.



Archduke Franz Ferdinand



The car in which Archduke Franz Ferdinand was travelling when he was assassinated in 1914

In the past Russia had promised to help Serbia. Furthermore Russia and France were allies. Germany, as an ally of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, launched attacks against France and Russia. As part of its attack on France some German

soldiers occupied Belgium. The UK had an agreement, or treaty, with Belgium. So it then declared war on Germany.

A local priest was called to say prayers for the Archduke and his wife soon after they were shot. The priest, who was friendly with the Archduke, ran a home for children in Sarajevo. He kept Franz Ferdinand's blood stained shirt. The Archduke was wearing it under his uniform when he was shot. The priest was also given the pistol that Princip used for the assassination.

When the priest died in 1926 the undershirt and pistol were given to his superiors in Vienna. In 2004 both were handed over to the Military History Museum in the city.

Several items, including the pistol and the car in which the Archduke and his wife were travelling, are on display in the museum. The undershirt, museum officials say, is very delicate. It normally has to be kept away from any light. The garment will be on display for two weeks. This period includes 28th June, which is the 99th anniversary of the assassination in Sarajevo. ■

UN ATTACKED IN SOMALIA

On 19th June a militant group attacked the offices of the United Nations (UN) in Mogadishu, the capital of Somali. At least 21 people were killed in the gun and bomb attack. Those who died included several people who worked for the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) as well as the seven attackers.

Soon afterwards a group called al-Shabaab claimed that it had organised the attack. The group's

leaders said that the UN was creating poverty in the country. It also accused the UN of blocking the introduction of Islamic law, in Somalia.

Somalia has had many problems. The country is still thought to be one of the most lawless places in the world. Until last year Somalia had not had an effective government for over 20 years. The country has also suffered from several recent famines. Today many people in Somalia do not have enough to eat.

Several years ago al-Shabaab took control of the southern part of the country. Its supporters believe that people should obey very strict Islamic laws.



In the recent past the African Union (AU), with help from the UN, decided to intervene in Somalia. They wanted the country to have a proper elected government. The AU and UN hoped that once Somalia had its own government its elected leaders could then start to solve the country's many problems.

Around 9,000 AU soldiers, mainly from Kenya, Ethiopia, Uganda, Burundi, and Djibouti, were sent to Somalia. By the beginning of 2012 they had managed to force all the al-Shabaab fighters in Mogadishu to leave.

Last year the UN arranged for the main tribes, or clans, in the country to select people for a new

245-member parliament. These members then elected Hassan Sheikh Mohamud as Somalia's president. Mr Mohamud is a former Mogadishu University professor.

Today, the government, with help from AU soldiers, is in charge of Mogadishu and the surrounding areas. Parts of the county near Kenya and Ethiopia are occupied by AU troops. Yet large areas of the countryside are still controlled by al-Shabaab. What's more the attack on the UN building shows that al-Shabaab is still able to operate in Mogadishu. The UN building is next to the city's airport where hundreds of AU soldiers are based.

The UNDP says that it assists countries that have suffered from war and conflict. This includes helping to set up new departments, which are needed to successfully govern a country.

Ban Ki-moon, the secretary-general, or leader, of the UN, said he was both sad and angry about the attack. The UN's leader in Somalia was not injured in the incident. He said that the UN would not leave Somalia but would continue to help the country recover from its many years of war and famine. ■

POPULATION REPORT

A department of the United Nations (UN), which calculates how many people live in the world, has recently released its latest report. It says that in July this year the world's total population will reach 7.2 billion. The UN predicts that by 2050 it will be 9.6 billion and reach 10.9 billion 50 years later, in 2100.

The number of people in the world has been growing very quickly over the last 200 years. It's estimated to

have taken about 250,000 years for the number of people living on the Earth to reach one billion. This happened in the early 1800s. By 1927, roughly one hundred years later, the population had risen to two billion. The next billion took only 32 years. The population reached seven billion in 2011.

In recent years population growth has not been the same in all parts of the world. In most, more developed, or wealthier, countries, the population has not been growing quickly. In some it has been shrinking. Yet in many less developed, or poorer, countries, the number of people has been increasing.



Crowded street in Hong Kong, China

The UN report says that most of the population growth between now and 2050 will be in African countries. For example, today around 170 million people live in Nigeria. It has the largest population of all African countries. The population of the USA is now about 316 million. The UN predicts that by 2050 there will be more people living in Nigeria than in the USA.

One of the main reasons for the population in many developed countries staying the same or decreasing is what's known as the **fertility** rate. This is the average number of children each woman has. In the 1970's the world's average fertility rate was around 4.45 (or 4.45 children per woman). The UN says that if a country's fertility rate drops to 2.1

or under its population is likely to decrease. This 2.1 figure is often called the replacement rate.

Some people say that the fertility rate drops when more women have access to **contraception**. Yet many organisations believe that this isn't the main reason. They claim it has more to do with education and where people live.

UN figures show fertility rates decrease at the same time as the female literacy rate increases. This is the number of women who are able to read and write. Also, the more urbanised a country becomes, or the greater the number of people who live in towns and cities, the lower its fertility rate.

Most developed countries now have a fertility rate of less than 2.1. These include most of Europe. The UN estimates that by 2050 the population of Europe will have shrunk by 14%.

Several European countries, including Russia, as well as Japan and South Korea, now worry that their populations are shrinking. Many women in these countries choose not to have more than one child. Some countries with populations that once grew very quickly are now below the 2.1 replacement rate. Examples of these include Brazil, China and Vietnam.

By 2100 the fertility rates in many less developed countries are also expected to decrease to 2.1 or below. So even though the world's population will continue to increase eventually, some time after 2100, it should begin to decline.

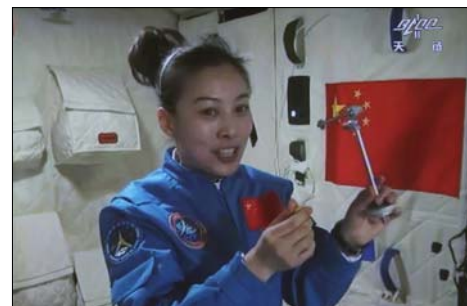
However, population figures are also affected by how long people live for. Because of better medical treatment and diet many people are now living longer. For instance, today, in many developed countries

around 23% of their populations are over 60 years of age. By 2100 this figure is expected to increase to 34%. ■

LECTURE IN SPACE

More than 60 million students and teachers at 80,000 schools in China watched an unusual science lesson, or lecture, on 20th June. It was broadcast from China's space module, or space station, and shown on live television.

The lesson lasted for about one hour. Wang Yaping, one of the three astronauts on board used things such as water, a **pendulum**, and spinning tops to demonstrate what happens to them in zero gravity. Ms Wang is the second Chinese woman to travel into space.



Wang Yaping's lesson in space

China's space station is called Tiangong-1. In Chinese Tiangong means 'heavenly palace' or 'sky palace'. Tiangong-1 was launched in 2011. The space module is in orbit about 350 kilometres (220 miles) above the Earth.

China's space flights are part of the country's Shenzhou programme. Each flight has a different number. The first flight, Shenzhou-1, was launched in 1999. The first Chinese manned space flight, Shenzhou-5, was in 2003. Last year's Shenzhou-9 was the first to dock, or join up, with Tiangong-1. Then three taikonauts

– the Chinese name for astronauts or cosmonauts – spent six days on board the space station.

Shenzhou-10, the latest space flight, was launched on 11th June. It also had a crew of three taikonauts. The launch took place from a space centre in the Chinese part of the Gobi Desert. Two days after the launch Shenzhou-10 docked with Tiangong-1.

The taikonauts spent ten days on the space station before returning to the Earth on 26th June. While on Tiangong-1 the astronauts carried out a number of tasks (including the one hour physics lesson). They also practiced docking. At first this was done automatically. Later, Shenzhou-10 moved away from the module. Then it docked again. Yet this time the crew did the docking manually, without the help of automated equipment.

Manual docking is an important thing to practice. It would have to be used in any future emergency if the automatic docking equipment on a spacecraft failed. Chinese officials said that both the automatic and manual docking had been a success.

During the lesson Ms Wang demonstrated how she could push one of the other astronauts, who was floating in the air, with her finger. She even drank a floating bubble of water. Ms Wang explained that from Tiangong-1 the sunrise could be seen 16 times every day. This is because the space station orbits the Earth every 90 minutes.

Around 300 school students watched the lesson from a special classroom at a university in Beijing, the capital of China. These students were able to speak with Ms Wang via a special radio link. They asked questions about space junk, the

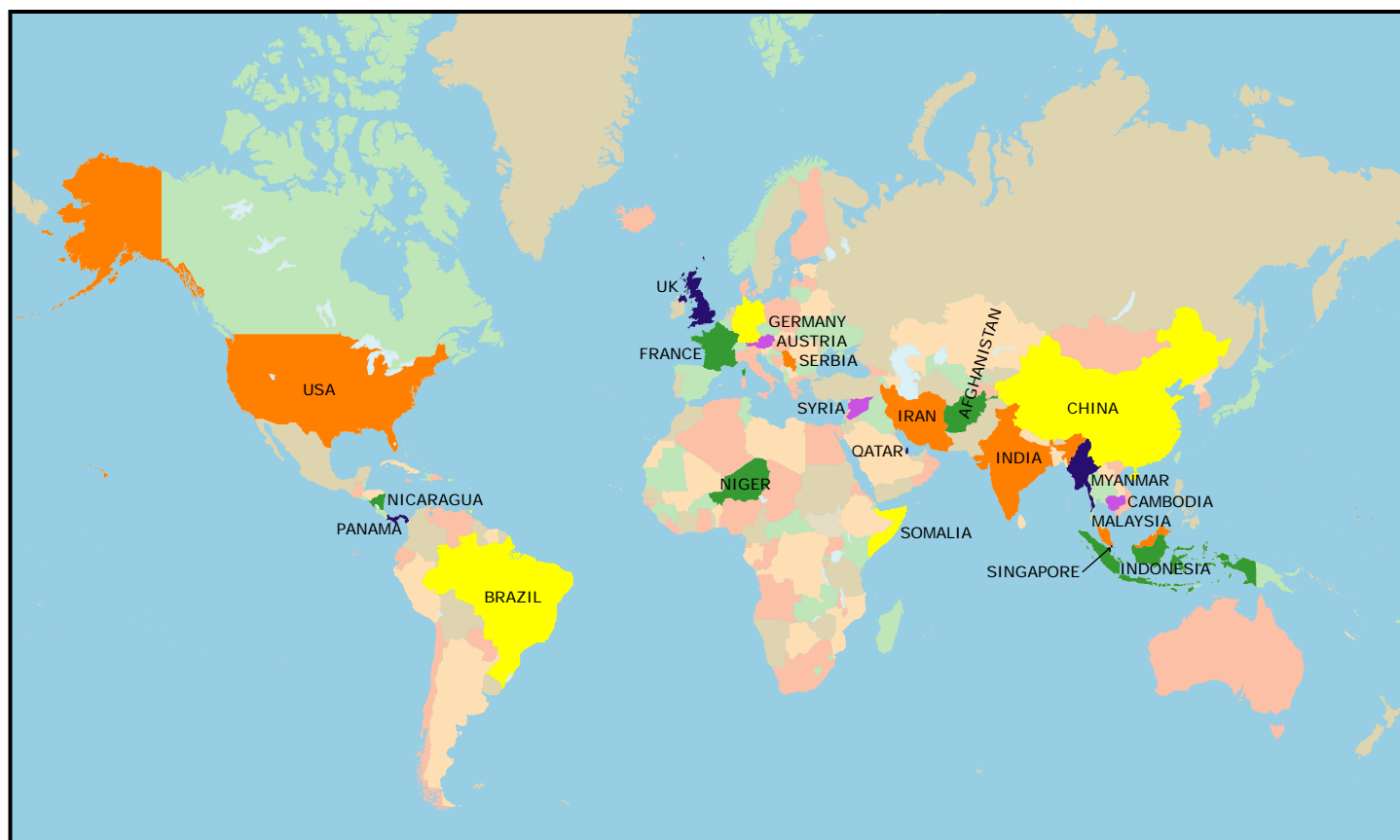
stars, how things can be weighed in space, which way is up and which way is down in zero gravity, and UFOs (unidentified flying objects).

Tiangong-1 is a **prototype** or experimental space station. It is about half the size of the first space station, called Salyut 1, which was launched by Russia in 1971. It is also much smaller than the International Space Station (ISS), which has been orbiting the Earth for over ten years. Unlike the ISS astronauts do not stay on Tiangong-1 all the time.

China plans to build its own permanent space station by 2020. ■

LONGEST AND SHORTEST DAYS

In the northern hemisphere this year's 'longest day' or 'Midsummer's day' was on 21st June. At the same time it was the 'shortest day'



or Midwinter's day' in the southern hemisphere.

It takes the Earth one year to orbit, or go around the Sun. As it does so the Earth spins on its axis. This is an imaginary line running from the North to the South Pole. This north-south axis is tilted by 23.4 degrees. This means different parts of the planet get different amounts of sunlight during the Earth's orbit around the Sun. The seasons, and the length of our day and night times, happen because of the way in which the Earth orbits the Sun.



People gather at Stonehenge, in the UK, on Midsummer's day, as Sun rises over Heel Stone

The different hemispheres tilt towards the Sun at different times of the year. When a hemisphere tilts away from the Sun the weather is colder and the nights longer. When the same hemisphere tilts towards the Sun, the opposite is true. The weather is warmer and the days longer.

Many people call the 'longest day', the summer solstice. It's true that this solstice happens around the time of the longest day. Yet the solstice is an exact moment in time. In the northern hemisphere it is when the Sun reaches its highest point in the sky if you were looking at it from the North Pole. At the same time it is the winter solstice in the southern hemisphere.

As the date of the summer solstice approaches (because of the Earth's tilt) the Sun gets higher and higher in the sky at midday. After

the summer solstice the midday Sun gradually moves lower. The days get shorter until the winter solstice when they begin to get longer again.

The name solstice comes from two Latin words, *sol* (or sun) and *sistere* (which means to stand still). In the northern hemisphere the summer solstice is on 20th or 21st June and the winter solstice takes place on either the 21st or 22nd December. In the southern hemisphere it is the other way round. The summer solstice is in December and the winter one in June.

The Earth does not complete an orbit of the Sun in an exact number of days. This is why the solstice is not always on the same day each year. There are 365 days in one year. Yet one complete orbit takes roughly 365.25 days.

Nowadays most countries use the Gregorian calendar, also known as the international calendar. The Gregorian calendar is adjusted every four years by adding an extra day, 29th February. The years that have 366 days are known as 'leap years'. (However, there are three leap years in every 400 years when an extra day is not added.) The last leap year was 2012.

Because the Earth takes about 365.25 days to go around the Sun each solstice happens about six hours later each year. This year, in the northern hemisphere, the summer solstice was on 21st June. Yet in 2016, or the next leap year, it will 'jump back' to 20th June.

It is known that Midsummer (or the summer solstice) was celebrated by many ancient cultures and civilisations. For example, the Ancient Egyptians and the Inca, in South America, designed some of their buildings so that they lined up, or aligned, with the Sun on Midsummer's day.

One of the most famous of these ancient 'alignments' is at Stonehenge, in the UK. There, on Midsummer's day, standing in the middle of the stone circle and looking towards its entrance, it is possible to see the sun rise over the Heel stone. This stone is just outside the main stone ring. Today many people gather at Stonehenge to see the sunrise on Midsummer's day. ■

WARPLANE RECOVERED

On 15th June the wreck of a German wartime aircraft arrived at one of the Royal Air Force (RAF) Museums, in the UK. The badly damaged plane was transported on two long trucks. One carried the wings and the other the fuselage, or main part of the aircraft. After the plane has been restored it will become part of the museum's military aircraft display.



Dornier raised from seabed (RAF Museum)

At the beginning of the Second World War (1939 – 1945) German air force commanders organised hundreds of bombing attacks on the UK. They hoped to destroy many things that would be useful to the UK government in times of war. These included airfields, factories, railways and docks, or places where ships load and unload what they are carrying.

To try to stop these attacks the UK's RAF used smaller fighter planes. When German bombers

were approaching the RAF planes would take off and try to shoot them down. These air battles in the skies above the south east part of the UK became known as the Battle of Britain. The air battle lasted throughout the summer and autumn of 1940. Both sides lost many planes. Eventually, the Germans decided to end their UK bombing attacks.

Three years ago officials from the RAF Museum announced that a wartime plane had been found upside down on the seabed. It was not far from the UK's southern coast. The plane was in an area where the sea is around 15 metres (50 feet) deep. The officials said it was a German bomber known as a Dornier Do-17Z. The officials believe the aircraft crashed into the sea, in 1940, soon after an RAF plane attacked it.



Wartime Dornier Do-17Z planes

Dornier Do-17Z planes had two engines. As they were long and thin they were nicknamed 'the flying pencil'. During the Battle of Britain the German air force used over 400 Dornier planes. Today, parts of a few of them are in museums in different countries. But the one found on the seabed is the only complete Dornier Do-17Z known to exist. Soon after it was discovered the RAF museum decided to **salvage** the plane and try to restore it.

Planning work took a long time. The plane had been on the seabed for over 70 years. Museum officials

worried that it would break up if it were moved. However, on 10th June a special crane managed to lift the Dornier out of the water and place it on a floating platform. The platform was then taken to the coast where the wreck of the plane was loaded onto the two trucks. The bodywork of the aircraft had been badly damaged by seawater. Yet, surprisingly, the plane's wide rubber tyres were still filled with air. The museum expects restoration work to take several years.

Military historians have managed to find out who was flying the plane and which RAF pilot shot it down. The Dornier had four airmen on board. Two were killed and the other two taken prisoner. The grandson of one of the German airmen and the son of the RAF pilot are now planning to meet. ■

NEW PRESIDENT IN IRAN

An election for a new president was held in Iran on 14th June. To many people's surprise Hassan Rouhani, who got just over 50% of the votes, won. Mr Rouhani is a Muslim **cleric**. Soon after the election result was announced thousands of people in Tehran, the country's capital city, gathered on the streets to celebrate.

Mr Rouhani will take over from Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who has been president for the last eight years. In Iran presidential elections are held every four years. Once a person has won two elections they are not allowed to stand for a third time.

Iran has a religious head of state called the Supreme Leader. The current Supreme Leader is Ali Khamenei, who is also a Muslim cleric. He has held the position since 1989. The country has what's known as

a Guardian Council. This has many powers. The Supreme Leader appoints most of the Guardian Council's 12 members. For this reason many people think that it is the Supreme Leader who runs Iran and not the president.



Iran's new president, Hassan Rouhani

Many people believe that Mr Ahmadinejad is a 'hardliner'. This means he is a politician who has extreme ideas and refuses to **compromise** or listen to others who think differently. During Mr Ahmadinejad's eight years as president Iran has had many disagreements with both the USA and most European countries. During this time many Arab countries in the Middle East have also become distrustful of Iran.

Most of these disagreements have been about Iran's nuclear programme. Many other countries suspect that Iran is developing nuclear weapons. Yet Iran insists this is not true. Mr Ahmadinejad has always said that his country has plans only to make electricity from nuclear power. However, Iran has refused to let nuclear inspectors, who work closely with the United Nations (UN), check some of its nuclear facilities. This has made other countries suspicious. Some Arab countries fear that Iran plans to use nuclear weapons to threaten them.

Because of the nuclear disagreements the UN has agreed that **sanctions** should be placed on Iran. This means that other countries are

restricted in what can be sold to, or bought from, Iran. These sanctions first began several years ago. They have caused many problems for Iran's economy. Its currency has been losing its value and many items have become expensive.

At the last election in 2009 Mir-Hossein Mousavi stood against Mr Ahmadinejad. Mr Mousavi was described as a 'moderate' or 'a reformer'. This is the opposite of a hardliner. Many people expected Mr Mousavi to do well. Yet it was announced that Mr Ahmadinejad had won easily. The result led to many demonstrations. The protesters were sure that the votes had been deliberately miscounted. Four years later Mr Mousavi is under house arrest. This means he is not allowed to leave his home.

Candidates for presidential elections in Iran have to be approved by the Guardian Council. All those who were approved, including Mr Rouhani, were believed to be hardliners. However, just before the election Mr Rouhani surprised many people. He declared that he wanted to free all political prisoners, improve Iran's relationship with other countries and give people more freedom.

Other countries, such as the USA, welcomed the election result. They said that, in future, they hoped to be able to work with Iran's new president. ■

NEW 'PANAMA CANAL'

Members of the Congress, or parliament, of Nicaragua have recently voted in favour of building a new canal. Similar to the famous Panama Canal it too will connect the Caribbean Sea and Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean.

Plans were first made to build a canal, or waterway, across Nicaragua around 150 years ago. Yet, these were abandoned after the Panama Canal was finally completed in 1914.



Before the Panama Canal opened ships travelling between the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans had to go around the southern tip of South America. The 79-kilometre (48 mile) long canal meant that this long, and sometimes dangerous, journey was no longer necessary. Ships travelling to or from the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans have to pay money, called a toll, to use the canal.

A French company first started building the canal in Panama in the 1880s. However, the company had many problems. Hundreds of its workers died from tropical diseases. Eventually, the company ran out of money. In 1903 the USA paid to finish building the canal and to run it in future.

The French plan was to build the canal at sea level. This would be the same as the Suez Canal, which was also built by French engineers. The Suez Canal connects the Red Sea and the Mediterranean Sea. It was opened in 1869. However, the land in Panama is quite high. So trying to make a sea-level canal would mean a very deep channel had to be dug.

The USA, using a different plan, took 14 years to complete the

canal. Instead of digging a very deep channel, engineers built a system of locks at each end of the canal. The locks are designed to raise ships up to a higher level. The American engineers also built several dams. The dams formed large man-made lakes, which then became part of the canal's route.

As ships have got bigger since the Panama Canal was built it is now being made wider. It is expected that this work will be completed sometime next year.

It takes ships between eight and ten hours to travel from one end of the Panama Canal to the other. Around 40 ships use the waterway every day. It's estimated that at least 5% of all the world's trade passes through the Panama Canal.

A company based in Hong Kong, in China, will build the new canal in Nicaragua. Daniel Ortega, Nicaragua's president, says that the company will use the latest technology to construct it. The route will make use of a large lake in the country called Lake Nicaragua.

The new canal will be about 285 kilometres (177 miles) long. It will also be deeper and wider than the Panama Canal. Therefore larger ships will be able to use it. It will take at least ten years to complete the work. However, ships should be able to start using the canal a few years before all the work is finished.

The cost of constructing the new canal is expected to be around US\$40 billion (£26 billion). The money ships pay to use the canal will be shared between the Hong Kong Company and the Nicaraguan government.

The government of Nicaragua expects that many ships will want to use its new canal. For some it will make their journey quicker. By using

the canal in Nicaragua, instead of the Panama Canal, ships sailing between the Atlantic and Pacific coasts of America would take one day less to complete their journey. ■

BERLIN SPEECHES

On 20th June Barack Obama, the president of the USA, visited Berlin, the capital city of Germany. He made a speech at the Brandenburg Gate, in the centre of the city.

Mr Obama's address reminded some people of two famous speeches made by former American presidents in Berlin. One was by John F Kennedy (1917 – 1963) and the other by Ronald Reagan (1911 – 2004). Kennedy's speech took place 50 years ago, in 1963. Reagan spoke, close to the Brandenburg Gate, in 1987.



President Obama speaking at the Brandenburg Gate, in Berlin

After the Second World War (1939 – 1945), Germany was divided between the USA, the UK, France, and the Russian-led Soviet Union. These countries had joined forces to defeat Germany in the war. The city of Berlin was in the Soviet Union's part of Germany. As it was the capital city, it too was divided between the four different countries.

However, the different countries didn't always trust one another. Soon after the war ended, the USA, the UK and France decided

to join their areas of Germany together to form the Federal Republic of Germany, or West Germany. This included their parts of Berlin, which became known as West Berlin. The Soviet Union's area of Germany was called the German Democratic Republic, or East Germany. It included the eastern part of Berlin.

To stop people moving to West Germany from the eastern part, the Soviet Union built a wire fence along the border. This was nicknamed the 'Iron Curtain'. In the city of Berlin the fence was replaced with a concrete wall in 1961. Known as the 'Berlin Wall' it was 165 kilometres (102 miles) long. It soon became a symbol of the separation between the Communist-led Soviet Union and the 'Democratic West'. The wall passed just in front of the Brandenburg Gate, which was in East Berlin.

At that time there were fears that a war could break out between the Soviet Union and the USA. If it did West Berlin was the first place that the Soviet Union was likely to attack. President Kennedy visited the city two years after the wall was built. He wanted to tell the people who lived in West Berlin that the USA was on their side. Over 450,000 people crowded into a city square to listen to him. His speech is best remembered for four words that he spoke in German: *Ich bin ein Berliner* (I am a Berliner).

Five months later Kennedy was assassinated, or shot and killed, in Dallas, in the USA. Soon afterwards officials in Berlin renamed the place where he had made his famous speech: John-F.-Kennedy-Platz.

President Reagan visited Berlin in 1987. He made his famous address close to the Brandenburg

Gate. Then Mikhail Gorbachev was the leader of the Soviet Union. During his speech Reagan said 'Come here to this gate! Mr Gorbachev, open this gate! Mr Gorbachev, tear down this wall!'

In 1989 mass protests began in East Germany. The protesters demonstrated against the East German government. As more people joined the protests the East German government realised it could not control the large crowds.

On 9th November 1989 the government said it would allow more people to travel to West Germany. On hearing the news thousands of people from East and West Berlin went to the wall. Some used sledgehammers to knock down parts of it. This date is now remembered as 'the day the wall came down'. The following year East and West Germany were reunited as one country.

In his speech Mr Obama talked about reducing the number of nuclear weapons. He suggested that both the USA and Russia each cut the number of their nuclear weapons by one-third. Mr Obama also talked about ending poverty and all wars in the world. ■

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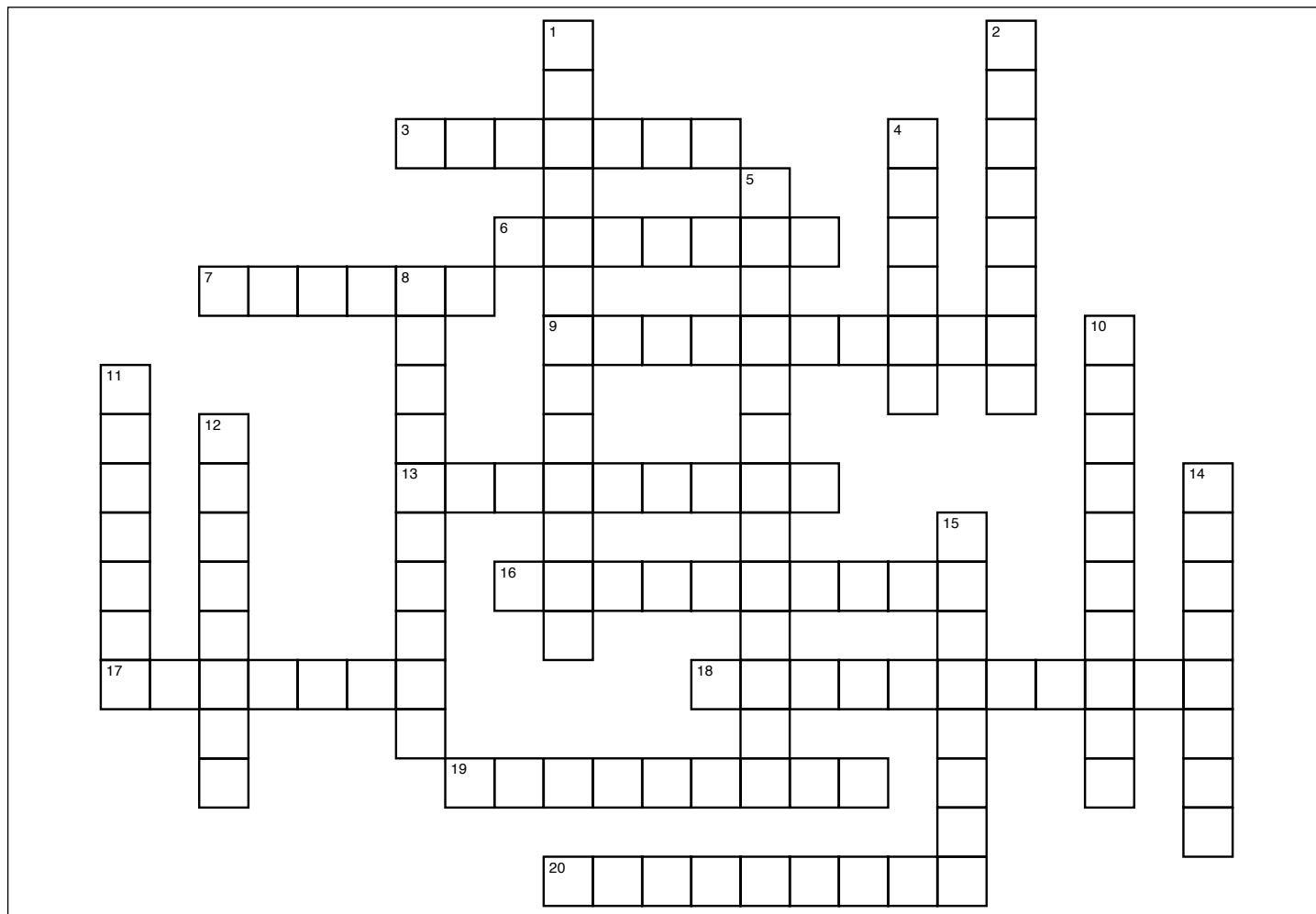
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ISSUE 200

GLOSSARY PUZZLE

INSTRUCTIONS: ① Complete the crossword. The answers are highlighted in orange in the news stories. There are 25 words highlighted and you need 20 of them to complete the crossword. ② Once you have solved the crossword go to the word search on the next page ➡



Across

- 3 Noun** A made-up name used by a writer
6 Noun An event that causes something else to start
7 Noun A place to which people go on holiday
9 Noun A group of organisations that work on a project together
13 Noun The ability to have offspring, often used in relation to the number of children to whom a woman gives birth
16 Verb To settle an argument by agreeing to something you do not want
17 Verb To raise the wreck of a ship or plane from the seabed
18 Verb Organising action in support of a cause or movement
19 Noun The first example of a product from which all later versions are developed
20 Noun A small group of people representing a larger organisation

Down

- 1 Noun** Medicines or devices used on purpose to prevent pregnancy
2 Noun (Plural) People who make a journey to a place for religious reasons
4 Noun A priest or religious leader
5 Adjective Completely new and very different from what has gone before
8 Adjective Given extra or added strength
10 Noun Passing from parents to offspring, a successive stage of people or animals
11 Adjective Describes something that has a rounded or circular shape
12 Noun A weight on a stick or thread that swings from side to side, forming a part of some clocks
14 Noun A story, play, poem or painting used to represent or symbolise a set of ideas
15 Adjective Describes something that can be easily damaged, broken or destroyed

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GLOSSARY PUZZLE *CONTINUED*

C O N T R A C E P T I O N U U B D E
 A O G N L V I J G U E W M Z W P X S
 M O N C I E P Y T O T O R P W C C I
 P W O S F L G S N R P I X Q P Q E M
 A H J J O P D A Z E O K R P D D O O
 I I D E S R N Q V V C S Y K F W C R
 G G W G B H T Z T L R R E O E Z C P
 N M R E Y X X I E U A X X R E N H M
 I R E N R F J R U N J S W K T P W O
 N H G E O O I R O M U I Y Q T E W C
 G P G R G C V I C O T Q E S I N G T
 T E I A E G T R B A A L X M M D Y U
 F N R T L U U L T G P E P I M U W S
 U N T I L E U K T G U T S R O L L R
 R A T O A B C P V A N C D G C U U P
 L M V N N T U U T B W Z D L P M T Q
 S E L L K F X W Z Y T I L I T R E F
 R E I N F O R C E D T G R P K E R O

INSTRUCTIONS: ③ Find 19 of the 20 crossword answers in the word search. Words can go vertically, horizontally, diagonally and back to front. ④ After finding the 19 words write down the 20th (or missing) word under the puzzle.

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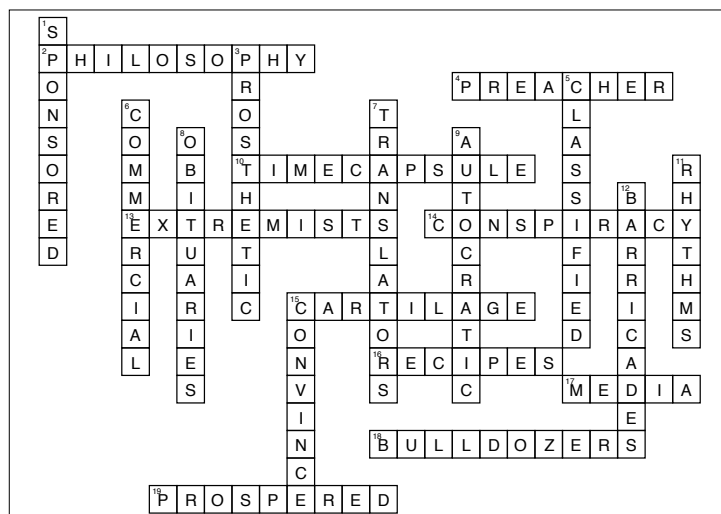


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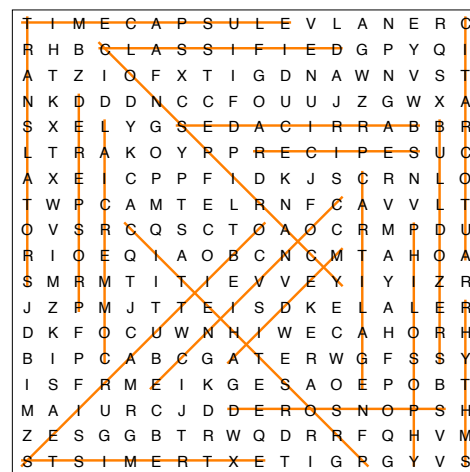
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MISSING WORD ANSWER =



ISSUE 199 ANSWERS



P R E A C H E R